"The Dowager Marchioness of Dumbleton, Your Grace!"

An elderly woman, very smartly dressed, came into the room. "Aunt Anne!" the Duke exclaimed. "This is a surprise!"

"I am on my way to London," the newcomer said, "and I thought I would drop in to see you."

"Then of course you must stay to luncheon," the Duke said.

"I was hoping you would ask me," his Aunt smiled.

Then she looked in surprise at Luella and the Duke said hastily: "Let me introduce Miss Hanley, whose father wrote *The Temples of Greece*, which I am sure you have read."

The Marchioness held out her hand. At the same time she was looking at Enrico. "And who is the little boy?" she enquired.

Luella knew that the Duke was thinking quickly, but there was a pause before he said: "He is the son of a friend of mine in Italy, who has recently died. She has sent him to England, asking if I would find a suitable school for him."

The Marchioness laughed. "Really, Ivor, people do seem to expect you to do the strangest things for them!"

"That is what I thought myself," the Duke replied.

"You must ask the Italian Ambassador to help you," the Marchioness went on. "I sat next to him at dinner at Marlborough House last week, and thought him a charming man."

"That is a very good idea, Aunt Anne," the Duke

answered. "I will get in touch with him as soon as I reach London this afternoon."

"So you are going to London, too!" the Marchioness exclaimed. "I knew you were here for a night or two, but I thought you were *alone*."

She accentuated the last word slightly, and the Duke said quickly: "Miss Hanley appeared unexpectedly yesterday evening, and you will not be surprised to learn that the letter announcing her arrival has not been delivered and is probably already lost!"

"It does not surprise me in the least!" the Marchioness agreed.

"I will just go and see about luncheon," the Duke said, "and I suppose your coachman will go round to the yard?"

"He knows the way," the Marchioness answered.

The Duke went from the room. Luella thought he was looking annoyed at being questioned as to why she was in the Castle unchaperoned. Enrico was searching among the cabinets to see if he could find a ship like the one he had found yesterday. The Marchioness, obviously curious, sat down on a sofa. "Come and tell me all about yourself," she said.

Luella, somewhat nervously, went and sat down beside her. "I do not think I have seen you here before," the Marchioness continued.

"I have been living abroad," Luella said, "and have only just come from Italy."

"So that is where you must have met my nephew," the Marchioness said. "Of course everything is very different for him now from what it was before." She glanced around the room before she added: "As I